THE

NAUTICAL MAGAZINE

AND

Naval Chronicle.

APRIL, 1857.

VOYAGE OF H.M.S.V. "TORCH,"—*Lieut. W. Chimmo, R.N., Commanding,—from Sydney to the Gulf of Carpentaria.*

At midnight of the 24th of June, 1856, we received our pilot and bade adieu to Newcastle, celebrated in Europe as well as Australia, as a port without other attractions than those of coals!

Our vessel, the *Torch*, was very deep, having on board 130 tons of this article, being 52 in excess of what she usually carried; but so important was it to us, that we crammed her almost dangerously, her sponson booms being level with the water's surface; but fine weather and a smooth sea favoured us.

On the morning of the 26th our voyage was threatened with an abrupt conclusion by the coals near the steam-chest taking fire; but timely measures happily prevented any serious disaster.

Favoured by fine weather, we continued our northerly course, passing empty whalers and other vessels, but at the same time regretting that instructions from his Excellency the Governor-General stated that we were not justified in expending any time in hydrographical or geographical inquiries other than those which may come in the way in navigating seas so little known. But an opportunity offered without detaining the vessel in her progress to Torres Straits, which enabled us to add another to former proofs of the non-existence of Gardner's 9 fathom shoal off the Great Sand Island, in lat. 25° 25′ S., and long. 154° E. And after leaving Cape Moreton

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(where a lighthouse has so long been promised and not yet commenced) we continued our voyage.

On the morning of the 28th, we had our first fair wind, fresh from S.W. The glorious sun rose from a bed of clouds, (light cirrus,) enriching them with a golden hue. In the West the land clear aud distinct, and in the South an occasional flash of lightning lighted up a few dark clouds, promising wind from that quarter. Our fair wind being established, steam was no longer required, and the *Torch* was soon under all her canvas as a brig; but had soon to reduce it to a sudden violent South-Easter, with rain, that settled down in a moderate S.W. gale.

We hauled up for Breaksea Spit, much disappointed at not having daylight and moderate weather to get a cast of the lead on Gardners Bank, although, from our position at noon next day it was evident that we had passed directly over the middle of it as placed on the chart. If this bank had been there the agitation of the sea would have plainly shown it.

On the evening of the 29th we hauled into Harvey Bay, and here we considered ourselves to have fairly entered the Barrier Reef. On the morning of the 30th, we found ourselves in the middle of the bay, with a light South wind and a cloudless sky, and soon after passed the entrance of Port Curtis. Towards night it fell a calm, and therefore we let go an anchor, in 15 fathoms; glad at this prospect of a rest after three nights of toil between Mount Warning and Lady Elliott Island.

The prospect of Port Curtis, as we lay at anchor off it, recalled to my mind recollections of former days. A few months only had passed since I had had occasion to visit Gladstone to pay the last sad duties to the remains of poor Spurling, one of the unfortunate persons who was murdered at the Percy Islands by the natives. I well remembered the reception I had met with even as a stranger, and I would now gladly have renewed an acquaintance with the Government Resident and his amiable lady in their unfrequented, isolated, and arid land; but our voyage admitted of no delay, and our motto was "onward."

At daylight on the 1st of July the anchor was at the bows, and we shaped our course for Cape Capricorn, with a very light air, which enabled us only to reach Keppel Bay, where we anchored in the evening under Hummocky Island, the Southern of the Keppel Group, probably the only vessel (and certainly the first steamer) that has anchored in this bay since the indefatigable Flinders, in the *Investigator*, in 1799; and which we gladly left the next day.

But the winds failing us, and having lost three days by it, we determined on again adopting steam; shortened all sail accordingly. Passing the First Lump during the night, as well as Peaked Island, we found ourselves, after making a due North course, at daylight with a small nameless sandy islet close alongside, which proved to be the sand islet on the inner elbow of Swain Reefs, with the group of Percy Isles to the West.

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It was on islet No. 2 of this group that only a few months since the unfortunate geologist, Mr. Strange, and his three companions, in the employment of Government, were brutally murdered by the natives, while collecting geological and botanical specimens, and it had fallen to my lot, in this same vessel, the *Torch*, to ascertain their fate. Three of their bodies had been thrown into the deep sea; the fourth, that of poor Spurling, I had found lying speared in a mangrove swamp.

At about five in the evening we passed close round the North side of No. 4 islet, having the low reef of rocks to the N.E. about one and a half miles. The passage clear, deep 33 fathoms, and without an apparent danger, steering for Double Island for an anchorage during darkness. It appeared to me somewhat remarkable that the different approaches to the safe and tranquil passage of the Inner Route should have undergone so little examination, and the several entrances to this route appear to have received but little attention, while the North from Rockingham Bay to Cape York has undergone so minute a survey.

At ten we anchored near Double Island in 20 fathoms, and found we had been set considerably to the Southward since leaving our last anchorage; during the night we found the flood setting S. 33° W., two miles per hour nearly, and the ebb to the N. 30° E., one mile per hour.

Favoured by a brisk S.E. trade, on the 5th we passed within one mile of the West side of Bailey Island, the position of which is correct with regard to the other islands surrounding it, but it may be safely erased from its new position, and allowed to occupy its former one on the chart.

We anchored off it for the night in 11 fathoms, soft green mud, with the passage through the islands bearing South. This enabled me also to add the North feature of the island, which completes it on the chart. Its height is about 700 feet; the two are disconnected by a narrow stream of water, and they are, as well as the rest of the group, most picturesque islands; green grassy slopes from the peak, some to the sandy beaches, others terminating in abrupt perpendicular cliffs; the valleys thickly studded with pine trees, present altogether a most pleasing appearance. No natives have as yet been seen among these islands.

At four on the morning of the 6th, we started with a smart breeze from S.E., passing Pentecost Island of the Cumberland Group,—a mass of almost perpendicular rock, of 1140 feet elevation. Then to Pine Island passage, through which we passed at 2h. p.m., having a cluster of small islands to the Eastward. It is here that many irregularities in islands and coast line are perceptible on the chart, and also the necessity for a coast survey, if ever this should be made a thoroughfare for the mariner. In one place are two islands one mile and three quarters off a cluster of islands, when in reality they were scarcely half a mile. Three rocks, N.b.W. of these, two about 30 feet high, and one about a quarter of a mile from it, about 10 feet high; the

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latter is not marked at all. A rock, dry at high water, off the South end of Island, is not noticed.

This new channel, which I am indebted to Captain Watson, the owner of the vessel, for allowing me to direct our course through in order to find its advantages or disadvantages to the inner route, should be named after that gentleman. It has an average depth from 20 to 35 fathoms, coral and soft mud, and without a single apparent danger in it; and by taking it much sea was avoided, independent of the novelty and credit of having passed through an unknown and really a good channel.

Off middle island, (Gloucester Bay,) on shaping a course for Cape Upstart, we found the compasses so sluggish that it was only by constantly worrying them that they could be induced to move at all. However, at daylight, we were off Cape Upstart, near which a light was seen, and also a few natives (four or five) near Cape Bowling-green; but they showed no inclination to communicate, although fires were observed along the coast, and particularly about Cape Cleaveland.

Before reaching the Palm Islands, Chilcotts 5 feet rocks were seen to break, every now and then, as it were, flashing through the darkness of the night; and hereabouts the indraught was very great, occasioned by the rush of water through the several openings in the reefs, distant from fifteen to twenty miles; by day it is clearly seen, but by night it is more dangerous, as no estimated allowance can be made for it.

It was fortunate that the rocks of Cape Sandwich did not arrest our progress, for here the natives, a few years since, made a most unprovoked attack on a fishing party belonging to H.M.S. *Fly*, and shortly afterwards they attempted to cut off a vessel obtaining water. But we saw no natives or fires about this bay.

Passing Rockingham Bay reminded us of the unfortunate and ill-fated expedition under command of Mr. Kennedy, who fell under the spears of the natives, in the presence of his faithful follower, just as he was about completing his arduous task. Of that expedition, which consisted of thirteen, only three returned alive.

We were now becoming at home with the coast, with the beautiful charts of Capt. Blackwood in our hand. There was no difficulty now in recognizing every part of the shore as we passed it, and felt assured that there are no more dangers than those which we saw,—no small relief of mind after passing by nearly 1200 miles of unsurveyed and comparatively unknown coast, from Port Stevens to Rockingham Bay, comprising fourteen degrees of latitude and eight degrees of longitude, without including the groups of Palm Island, the Northumberland, the Cumberland, the Percy, and the Keppel Isles. A portion of this coast, from Port Stevens to Moreton Bay, contains three rivers navigable for steamers:—the Mac Leay, the Clarence, and the Manning. Those steamers leave Sydney weekly with passengers and cargo.

[A pressure of other matter compels us to reserve more of Lieut. Chimmo's important journal for our next. ED.]

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of Vigo, old as it is, proved good enough for her Majesty's ships, and it does not follow that immediately a new foreign plan of a harbour is received it should be republished by the Admiralty. These matters are always judged by their comparative importance, and published in point of time according to that scale: and Vigo was provided for.

In fact *the plan that was to be had* was good enough, as it has long proved to be in the hands of *careful* navigators. Had the new one been on board the *Madrid* it could not have shown more clearly, than the old one did, that rock which was the occasion of her loss. And the report, instead of saying that the rock on which the *Madrid* struck was "not in the Admiralty chart," should have stated that the rock appears to be laid down in the plan of Vigo of Tofiño's pilot, which plan continues in publication and is sold by the Admiralty agent, but with which the *Madrid* did not take care to supply herself.

We turn from the subject with astonishment and regret. For it seems scarcely credible that a master mariner in charge of a large and valuable steam-ship, should go to sea without a plan of a port which he is destined to enter, that he might have had for sixpence,—that in fine calm weather, *with only a coasting chart on board*, he should have had the temerity to pass a point of land (and at the rate of ten knots per hour) *! about !* a hundred yards from it; and it seems still more incredible and certainly much to be regretted that a body of men, conversant with maritime affairs, with all the facts of the case before them, could possibly have given their verdict that the loss of *his ship* was occasioned by an Admiralty chart!

[It is a curious circumstance in the history of the *Tay*, mentioned above, that she was saved by one commander, who lost his command after getting her into and out of an awkward position, to be lost by his successor, who got her into an awkward position without getting her out of it.]

VOYAGE OF H.M.S.V. "TORCH,"—*Lieut. W. Chimmo, R.N., Commanding,—from Sydney to the Gulf of Carpentaria.*

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Neither of these rivers, the Mac Leay, the Clarence, or the Manning, are noted on the charts. Into Broad Sound it is said that the great Burdekin River flows; and if time and circumstances had permitted I would have examined this latter when passing through the Northumberland Isles.

Off the North Barnard Isles the wind failed us, and we anchored under the lee of the outer one. The whole island is micaceous, containing quantities of lead ore and veins of quartz, and the beach a mass

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of dead corralines in all shapes and forms. We saw no natives to interrupt us in our run on shore.

During a calm here we had a visit from a native in a bark canoe, paddled with two pieces of stave about a foot long; he had nothing whatever in his canoe, but he wished us very much to anchor near his beach. He was very friendly, and made his canoe fast alongside at once with a piece of spun yarn, and did not leave us until a sudden and fresh breeze sprung up from the Northward, which, however, soon again died away. We gave the poor fellow some biscuit and fishhooks, and parted on good terms with him. The only words of English he made use of, and pretty frequently too, were—"Go away, fellow;" but I do not think he knew the meaning of them.

The day turned out most unusually rainy and gloomy, a dismal contrast to the fine clear weather we had been enjoying. The wind was both variable in direction as well as force, sometimes from North fresh, then off the land with rain, while albicore and bonettas were jumping around us in numbers.

The sea in the afternoon was covered with medusæ and what sailors call "sea-sawdust" in streams and bands lying N.W. and S.E., of which specimens were preserved.

The night continued dark with rain, the wind light and very variable, as we heard the reef plainly breaking outside of us, and the ship was gradually drifting towards it. So that we were obliged to anchor at 11h. p.m. in 17 fathoms, and found the current setting North about one mile per hour.

The Frankland Isles were passed the next day, woody, rocky, islets, having sand spits, like all the islands within the reefs, on their North extreme, covered with dead coral, and affording anchorage during the S.E. trades.

Fitzroy Island was passed soon afterwards, a larger island than either of the former, about four or five miles in circumference, densely wooded, and nearly 900 feet in elevation. The anchorage here appears secure, formed as it is by a deep crescent-shaped sand and dead coral beach, facing N.W. This island appears to be of granite formation, and is attractive from having fresh water on it. On a sandy beach on the mainland abreast of this island many natives were seen jumping about. The low green bushy island on the inner edge of the Barrier Reef was plainly seen about four or five miles distant to the Northward.

Continuing our course, in the evening we passed close to the position assigned to the Satellite Rock; but could not discern any inclination to break. A rock in that position, which would stop a vessel of the *Satellite's* draught of water, should have shown itself in the sea that was then running. A patch of discoloured water in its vicinity, perhaps was veiling a danger, or perhaps only discoloured by washings from the reefs close by.

Capt. Stokes says, in vol. i. p. 342 of his *Discoveries in Australia*, that he searched for a shoal in lat. 16° 24¼′ S., Low Islands N.N.W. four miles, on which H.M.S. *Imogene* struck. This must be the same

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I was for an hour so anxiously looking for, or from being called Satellite Rock on the *Fly's* chart, have two vessels run into the same danger?

We passed on the West side of the Low Islands, (Trinity Bay,) off which a coral reef extends a good half mile, and which at night would be dangerous to vessels passing, particularly as it is the lee side and does not break. From this island we stood North for the night, (allowing for indraught and leeway,) thirty-three miles, no danger being visible, and anxious to take every advantage of the strong S.E. wind blowing. At 11.15 p.m. anchored for the night, as we were nearing the dangers off Hope Isles. The weather was also thick and rainy, and in the morning it was desirable to have a look to the doubtful existence of a shoal in Weary Bay. The next morning we could see nothing of the shoal on which a merchant ship struck, and we therefore resumed our course.

On passing Rocky Island, in lat. 15° 36½′ S., the ship passed between two patches of discoloured water, which looked very suspicious indeed, and had it not been blowing a gale, we might have examined them,—especially as two others appear in the chart to the N.E.

Passing Endeavour River in the forenoon, and knowing from experience the difficulties of the navigation, those which our great circumnavigator experienced were brought forcibly before us. It was here he had brought his ship in a sinking state to repair after "grinding" on the reefs for twenty-three hours; and here he effected his object sufficiently to proceed with her to Batavia. Others have followed his example, and shipwrecked crews have fled here for refuge. We therefore fired a gun on passing, and showed our colours to attract the attention of any unfortunate persons who might be there; but not even a native appeared. Soon after passing it we found ourselves in discoloured water, with the pyramidical mount of 1,500 feet, near the river's entrance, named Mount Cook, (worthy monument of the man if it be the only one,) bearing N.W.b.N. (mag.) five or six miles distant; and Turtle Reef due East; the ship passed through a patch of discoloured water, the heavy sea that was running almost breaking on it, and this prevented a cast of the lead being taken. It was a relief to find the vessel was again in blue water.

After leaving Cape Bedford we steered a course for Three Islands, arranging it so that the course would take us directly over the Victor Shoal. On passing this spot there was a heavy sea running, caused by the opening in the reefs to the S.E.; but notwithstanding an anxious look out for it, no sign whatever appeared of a shoal, and had there been one it must certainly have shown itself. Capt. Stokes and other surveying officers have examined this supposed danger with a similar result.

We passed within two cables' length of Three Isles, and on leaving Cape Flattery I kept close to the danger marked doubtful in lat. 14° 49′ 30″ S., and long. 145° 22′ 40″ E., with no more satisfactory results than those of the Victor Shoal; then we stood for Lizard Island to the N.E., when a sudden gale from the S.E. compelled us to let go an anchor, in 8 fathoms mud, and make everything snug for

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the night, which promised to be most boisterous. During the day we made upwards of one hundred miles, which was more than an average of nine knots an hour.

Reflecting on the trials and vicissitudes which Capt. Cook endured in the course of his voyages, particularly near the Endeavour River, which we had so recently passed, I could not but feel an inward satisfaction that it has been my good fortune to have been connected with vessels which have followed that inimitable explorer in all his voyages; tracing him in the Arctic Regions, in the Antartic Seas, in the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, round Australia, and through the Polynesian Isles, and finally to the rock in Karakoa Bay (Sandwich Isles) where he met his untimely end. Often have I marvelled at what he effected with the small means at his command:—a quadrant, a pocket-watch, and a dull unseaworthy vessel! That all his work should approach so near the truth, does infinite credit to his name. He is long since gone from us and, alas, forgotten!!! How prone we are too soon to forget the dead! The living are "all in all," the dead unnoticed! We see no monument to remind us of so wonderful a man as Cook (except perhaps one in some secluded place in England). Nature has supplied many, in mountains and rivers, islands and capes, to which his name has been gladly affixed; but where is there an artificial one? the work of man's hand! Not in Australia!

It blew very hard during the night; but the vessel rode it out easily. The sea had risen so much that while at anchor, although head to wind, and current in the same direction, several seas topped over the after part of the paddle-boxes to the quarter-deck, washing all before them.

From our anchorage we steered the next morning for the narrow entrance between the reefs, which is barely one and a half miles wide, with a strong favourable current. Here Noble Island affords a good entrance mark.

A little before noon we suddenly found but a few feet water under the port paddle-box,—a supposed porpoise turned out to be a rock! not a boat's length off the ship; the vessel touched the ground, going nine knots, but happily without injury; and thus passed one of our most narrow escapes.

Rounding Cape Melville, the foot of a ragged mass of loose granite blocks, we hauled up West for Flinders Group. It was near Cape Melville that the natives on two occasions behaved so treacherously to visitors, and attacked the boat's crew of the *Bramble* while watering. This must warn future voyagers, should they have occasion to call near this dreary and inhospitable spot.

After passing Cape Melville we steered for Castle Hill of Flinders Group; and here large native fires were observed on the elevated hills South of that group, made to attract our attention, and allure us into their treacherous nets. We passed close (within half a mile) of North Flinders Point. In two or three of the sandy inlets two canoes (hollowed from a tree), having outriggers, were seen hauled

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up on the beach; and here and there a group of three or four natives, men, women, and children, were *planted;* but evidently timid; for on our rounding each point so closely as we did, our appearance was rather sudden among them, and they darted away behind a tree, where they remained until we had passed. Possibly they have some recollections of their former treacherous proceeding thirteen years before.

The next day, Heaths Rocks awash, were passed close, and most ugly dangers they are, not breaking in smooth water at half tide; but a brown discoloured water points out their vicinity. The indraught from the ocean swell through the openings in the reefs, induced us to pass on the lee side of them. The openings here alluded to are the second and third three mile openings and some smaller ones.

Taking a correct departure from No. 7 sand islet, (swarming with pelicans and other birds of various species, and having a pole of drift wood, about twenty feet high erected on it,) we steered a direct course N.N.W. for the South end of Night Island, which would carry us (as there was sufficient daylight) over Chilcotts Rock awash, the position of which is noted doubtful on the charts. It will be seen that a line drawn from No. 7 sand to the South extreme of Night Island passes over the eastern edge of the rocks; but no sign of the rocks could be seen. The chart informs us they are rocks awash, possibly at low water; and as the sea was smooth and the tide three quarters flood, they may exist.

These doubtful positions of dangers have one good effect, they keep Captains and masters on the alert, and perhaps if we had a few more dotted about the charts we should have more vigilance and less loss of life and property. We anchored for the night about eight miles North of Night Island, with three dangers before us, waiting for daylight before we can attempt to pass them.

Next day we passed the Sheward Isles, small insignificant sand islets, with a few bushes on them, and from these stood for Cape Weymouth.

Cape Direction was passed at 9h. a.m. It was here, and not at Cape Melville, that Bailey, one of the *Fly's* men, lost his life by a spear from a native. When the spear was withdrawn the barb remained in the wound, which in a few days caused his death. Here several large snakes were seen during the day lively enough on the surface of the water, and diving at once on seeing the vessel, not giving us time to observe their species.

Restoration Island, the first land seen by Bligh after his unparalleled voyage in the *Bounty's* launch, 1780, was now before us. As the *Torch* passed it we could not but gaze on it with feelings of sympathy, connected as it is with a sailor's sufferings and misfortunes. It was on this spot, nearly seventy-six years since, that this officer first saw land after a voyage in the *Bounty's* launch, which stands unrivalled in the history of navigation.

It was called Restoration Island by him from having seen it on the

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anniversary of King Charles's restoration to the throne. We gazed at every rock and bush as we glided swiftly by, as they reminded us of the perils and vicissitudes which he had endured.

Middle Reef, in Weymouth Bay, is a long dangerous reef nearly two miles in length, and having only one mangrove tree on its South sandy point; a smaller shrub is, however, growing near it. From this we had a long run for the Piper Isles of nearly twenty miles, with a strong favourable current.

The weather had now changed to thick and dirty, with occasional showers. We had passed the break in the reef where Bligh entered in the *Bounty's* launch, which is also near where Capt. Cook entered a few years previously. At 4h. p.m. we entered the narrow channel of the Piper Isles, and steered direct for Young Island, to note if it had advanced since Capt. King's visit in 1820, when he describes it as "A small rocky shoal on which were two small trees. This particular is recorded as it may be interesting at some future time to watch the progress of this islet, which is now in an infant state; it was named on this occasion Young Island." Its appearance in 1839 (nineteen years afterwards) is described in Stoke's Voyage of the *Beagle* as "An elevated reef, with *one* small mangrove growing on the highest part." On the 15th of July, 1856, (thirty-six years afterwards,) we had a fair inspection of this same islet, passing less than a quarter of a mile from it. It is young still, but boasts of no green leaf or blade of grass of any description. Nothing remains but a small sandy patch, with dead coral, surrounded by a fringe reef about a mile across, having two large stones a little more elevated than the sand on the North side. Not even a bird was seen on it. Therefore this island, in a period of thirty-six years, had not progressed in elevation or verdure; but, on the contrary, retrograded.

Forbes Island, which we passed, is noted for being a depôt for all sorts of stores collected from wrecks about the Barrier Reefs, deposited there by persons who make a living by them.

On taking bearings for our anchorage, they placed us exactly on a spot where the top of the thumb may have been placed without touching a sounding, and in which space we found 15, 14, 15, and 14 fathoms, and then let go the anchor for the night, which was thick, misty, and squally. Here we found a weather set of the current caused by being deflected by the land about the Home Islands, part of the body of the water rushing to the Northward and a lesser part to the Southward. The vessel was a little uneasy at her anchor, caused by the above circumstance; but it moderated towards midnight.

At daylight we continued our voyage, with the pleasing prospect of a fine day before us to conclude our Inner Route navigation after the thick and rainy weather we have had. A fresh wind from S.E. was grateful, as it assisted us in weathering Sir E. Home's Isles, and we then bore away under all sail for the Bird Isles, two groups of small sandy isles, covered with trees, having a deep passage between them. We soon passed the remains of the wreck of the *Sir A. Camp-*

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bell, on the North extreme of Cockburn Reef. How this ship could have been lost there it is difficult to imagine. She might as well have been lost on the Sow and Pigs, in Sydney Harbour! reefs equally well-known!

At noon to day we had an increase of the thermometer in the sun's rays, which showed 105°, exceeding by 10° what we had before experienced.

(To be continued.)

THE POPULATION OF CHINA,—*A Letter addressed to the Registrar-General, London. By Sir John Bowring.*

(Concluded from page 180).

While so many elements of vitality are in a state of activity for the reproduction and sustenance of the human race, there is probably no part of the world in which the harvests of mortality are more sweeping and destructive than in China, producing voids which require no ordinary appliances to fill up. Multitudes perish absolutely from want of the means of existence—inundations destroy towns and villages and all their inhabitants; it would not be easy to calculate the loss of life by the typhoons or hurricanes which visit the coasts of China, in which boats and junks are sometimes sacrificed by hundreds and by thousands. The late civil wars in China must have led to the loss of millions of lives The sacrifices of human beings by executions alone are frightful. At the moment in which I write, it is believed that from 400 to 500 victims fall daily by the hands of the headsman in the province of Kwang-tung alone. Reverence for life there is none, as life exists in superfluous abundance. A dead body is an object of so little concern, that it is sometimes not thought worth while to remove it from the spot where it putrefies on the surface of the earth. Often have I seen a corpse under the table of gamblers—often have I trod over a putrid body at the threshhold of a door. In many parts of China there are towers of brick or stone where toothless—principally female—children are thrown by their parents into a hole made in the side of the wall. There are various opinions as to the extent of infanticide in China, but that it is a common practice in many provinces admits of no doubt. One of the most eloquent Chinese writers against infanticide, Kwei Chung Fu, professes to have been specially inspired by "the God of literature" to call upon the Chinese people to refrain from the inhuman practice, and declares that "the God" had filled his house with honours, and given him literary descendants, as the recompense for his exertions. Yet his denunciations scarcely go further than to pronounce it wicked in those to destroy their female children who have the means of bringing them up; and some of his arguments are strange enough: "To destroy daughters," he says,

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being high and bold; and by the addition of the light the position of the beacon is merely made as visible by night as by day, at the greatest possible distance; so that whichever mouth of the Danube is adopted for navigation, Serpent Island is of great utility to the mariner as a sea beacon or sentinel to the low coast of the Delta; for it is not necessary for a vessel actually to approach close to it before bearing up, but merely to see it, which can be done by night or day, in clear weather, even from eighteen to twenty-four miles distant.

VOYAGE OF H.M.S.V. "TORCH,"—*Lieut. W. Chimmo, R.N., Commanding,—from Sydney to the Gulf of Carpentaria.*

(Continued from page 240.)

The appearance of the land was now different to that we had hitherto seen. Instead of dark granitic mountains we had white sand hills before us, which reflected a bright glossy light from the sun, assuming with mirage every fantastic shape, and reflecting their strange and irregular figures in the sea below; some patches on the hills resembled large houses or country seats, and frequently had the appearance of cities in tropical regions.

As the evening of the 16th closed on us, the night being fine, we stood on, although in intricate waters, in hopes of anchoring at Booby Island the next day, so as to have made the passage *within* the time allowed by Capt. Blackwood's Sailing Directions!

Having passed Turtle Island, however, darkness obliged us to anchor near it until daylight, when we were again off, passing the opening to Kenedy River; and also within a prudent distance of the coast about Albany Island and Cape York.

The increased traffic through Torres Straits has directed attention to this island as a depôt for steam communication, as well as a refuge for the shipwrecked mariner. I have not seen any spot (from a distance) better adapted than this, open as it is to a brisk S.E. trade wind for half the year. It would prove beneficial to the natives, and a home for the shipwrecked sailor might be established there, who now proceeds to Booby Island, where, if his patience is exhausted he makes a desperate effort to reach Coepang. Stores of various sorts for shipping would find many a purchaser; scarcely a vessel comes through the Barrier without loss of anchor or anchors, from the strength of tides.

Cape York is not so attractive in appearance as Albany, and is objectionable from being surrounded by shoal water bays. It is particularly barren in appearance, but is attractive from the number of ant hills, of red clay, about ten feet high, which are scattered about it, and may be seen a considerable distance. On first seeing them on Albany Island in a cluster, they appeared an encampment, very much resembling our ordnance tents, but more peaked, like a sugar-loaf.

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Fresh water is abundant in Evans Bay, two miles from Albany; the *Fly* filled between 70 and 80 tons there.

After rounding Cape York, the Prince of Wales Channel was taken in preference to Endeavour Strait that we might observe the spot where the *Phœnix* steamer was wrecked, as well as the cause of that accident. Besides, intending to call at Booby Island to ascertain if there was any notice of the North Australian Expedition, this route was twelve miles nearer. Passing *between* Straits Rock and the rock awash off it, towards Wednesday Island, we found a very strong indraught.

At noon, with a fine commanding breeze and a clear sky, we entered the much dreaded channel, the water quite smooth, but the current rushing madly by at the rate of about five knots per hour, particularly off Hammond Island Rock, where the *Torch* was scarcely manageable. On hauling up for the Ipili Reef of rocks above water, there lay, on a sunken two fathom rock, the remains of the *Phœnix*, one paddle-wheel and a portion of her engine above water, a miserable picture to the voyager.

This ill-fated steamer, belonging to Capt. Towns of Sydney, left that place about a year ago in charge of Capt. Chilcott, an experienced and clever navigator, bound to Point de Galle and Singapore, for sale, loaded with coals; and in passing the Straits ran on a sunken rock, which made her a total wreck. Her crew escaped to Booby Island, from whence they reached Batavia and Singapore. The vessel is now lying with her paddle-wheel above water and part of her cranks, as well as one cylinder or air pump cover. All her wood work is entirely gone, either destroyed by natives or washed adrift by the strong tides; and there she remains, a beacon to the mariner! Her unfortunate commander has departed this life, I shall therefore forbear making any remark that may reflect on him. These that I am about to make may I trust be of service to those who follow in the successful wake of the *Torch*.

The *Phœnix* went on shore during daylight on a reef of rocks above water at high tide,—the Ipili Reef,—how did she get there?

After entering the Prince of Wales Channel nothing is in the way of a ship until rounding Hammond Rock, which may be done at the distance of a quarter of a mile, as the tide rushing through here very rapidly, (five knots per hour,) requires great care in keeping the vessel in hand ready for any manœuvre; if she once takes charge no anchors will hold her, and destruction is certain. From this rock a vessel should keep on the course pointed out, viz., S.W.b.W. until Round Island bears S.E., then haul boldly up for the dry rocks of the Ipili Reef, always in sight, and pass them at half a mile distance. When the highest part of Goode Island bears S.E., steer for Booby Island W.b.S., when you are clear of all dangers.

To show the necessity and advantage of the captain of a ship under any circumstances keeping his eyes about him, if I had allowed the Sailing Directions for Torres Straits, (1853,)* page 14, to

* An old edition, but now corrected.

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have been my guide, the *Torch* would soon have been alongside the *Phœnix* in the same predicament; but all this has since been corrected, and the foregoing are sufficient instructions.

We passed within a cable's length of our less fortunate friend. She was the first steamer that attempted to sail through,—and was lost. The *Torch* was the next, and although inefficient, (?) was successful.

At noon, when the Ilipi Rocks bore East, and the West end of Goode Island South, we bore up for Booby Island, and hoisted our colours, rejoicing at our anxious twenty-two days of intricate navigation being concluded. During this Inner Route Passage we had passed close by or over *eleven* dangers, the existence and positions of which are marked doubtful. We also expunged one island—Bailey Island—and discovered a rock 10 feet above water, as well as a new and shorter route through the Percy Isles.

With light hearts at feeling ourselves once more in clear water, free from dangers, we thought of nothing but our good fortune until we were close by Booby Island, and here anchored late in the afternoon, having made our passage in twenty-two days from Newcastle. Capt. Blackwood states in his *Directory*, that "a fair passage by the Inner Route from Sydney to Booby Island is from twenty-five to thirty days;" the Outer Route nineteen days. We have therefore reduced it by three days; and this too with a paddle-wheel steamer under *sail*.

The first thing was to land and see if any notice had been left connected with the North Australian Expedition. There was none.

The Post Office was visited, and a preserved potato tin, with the bottom out, found with notices to the following effect:—

Three vols. *Chambers' Miscellany*, left by Capt. Black of the brig *Gallant*, of Calcutta, May 25th, 1856, from Geelong to Singapore. Also this day the *Gallant* and *Arratoon Apcar*, I. Francis, Commander, called *en route* to Singapore, having left Melbourne 2nd of May. Entered Torres Straits by Bligh's Entrance. Saw the wreck of the *Phœnix;* and for the use of any unfortunate mariners who may pass this way, I have left,—one bag of bread, a few onions, three boxes matches, a few yams, some paper and pencil, oil, coals, and salt, one box cheroots (250), a little sugar, three bottles rum, a cake of windsor soap!

Left by the ship *William Prowse*, one newspaper, *Southern Cross*. *William Prowse*, of Liverpool, Wm. Williams, Master, sailed from New Zealand 5th of May; sighted Norfolk Island; entered the Barrier on the 9th; boarded the *Challenger*, of Melbourne, bound to Singapore, twenty-four days out, with loss of anchor and 45 fathoms of chain, while riding under the Middle Banks, Torres Straits; no other vessel seen. All well on board.

Barque *India*, of Hobartown, left 3rd of June; 23rd anchored under Cockburn Reef, two anchors down, lost one; visited natives in Blackwood Bay, a queer lot, baccy and rum in demand; twenty-six days out. All well.

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Barque *Antoinette*, of Rotterdam, Sydney to Batavia; left stores of various sorts in the Cave. Had squally weather off Middle Bank; twenty-four days out.

Royal Saxon, of Sydney; left 15th of June; anchored at Booby Island 28th of June; left two letters for transmission.

Barque *Alverton*, Melbourne to Batavia; Booby Island August 23rd. All well.

Brig *Forelaw*, Geelong to Batavia; 23rd of August, 1855.

Marie Gabriel, Sydney to Samarang; 9th of September, 1855.

Ship *Gloriana* came through Bligh's Entrance, September 25th, 1855; saw the wreck of a steamer; mentions a letter having been left, so suppose it has been forwarded.

Marie Cæsar, Sydney to Timor and Manilla, 7th of October, 1855. This ship saw six wrecks on the Detached Reefs, two of recent loss; 7th of October, saw a brig on the reefs, N.N.E. from Raines Island. When Raines Island bore North from the ship, four more wrecks were seen from the fore top-gallant-yard. Two boats with white men had gone to the Westward just before.

Washington Irving, Durant, Commander, from Sydney 7th of May, 1856. Landed government provisions.

Acaster, barque, seventeen days out.

Sky-rocket, schooner, Melbourne to Ceylon, twenty-eight days out.

Robert and Betsey, brigantine, Melbourne to Colombo, 8th of May, 1856, twenty-eight days out.

Alexander, brig, from Nelson, twenty-one days out.

Nora, schooner, and *Chieftain*, through Bligh's Entrance, sixteen days out. All well.

Blair, barque, Sydney to Calcutta, twenty-one days out. All well. 27th of June, 1856.

It will be seen that all these vessels have come the Outer Route, and have passages as follows:—23, 23, 24, 26, 24, 13, 17, 28, 28, 21, 16, and 21 days. Five of these have been more rapid than the *Torch*, (22 days,) and seven have not been so expeditious. Two vessels have lost anchors and cables. One vessel, the *Marie Cæsar*, has seen eleven wrecks on the Outer Barrier, one inside.

This I think is convincing proof of the superiority of the Inner Route, and the necessity of having a "Shipwrecked Sailors' Home" on the northern shores of Australia. Those two boats with white men, spoken of by the *Marie Cæsar*, have never been heard of since, now ten months.

Booby Island, Post Office.

To the liberality of Mr. Watson we were indebted for a flag-staff,

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and a puncheon cask was converted into a post-office, with shelves in it for small stores, books, &c. The flag-staff, 20 feet high, was an old fore top-gallant and royal mast of the *Torch*, and the "New Post Office" was a new puncheon placed on its end, three bung staves taken out to the hoops, shelves placed in it, and a tarpauling nailed over the top, with a flap covering the opening, and painted "Post Office." In this were placed the library books, pens, ink, and paper, the "Letter Bag" for the Postmaster General, Sydney, and all the small perishable articles placed on the shelf, such as tea, cigars, sugar, salt, &c.

The provisions in the cave were found to consist of—two barrels of beef, two ditto pork, one keg of rum, three bags of bread, one cask of bread, eight hogsheads of water, twenty tins of preserved meats, two bottles of rum; besides many smaller articles noticed before.

A large strongly bound book for the purpose of noting any particular incident that may befal the passer by, was left there by us with the following memorandum in it:—Note Book for Booby Island, or Shipwrecked Sailors' Retreat. Left here by Lieut. W. Chimmo, of the *Torch* steamer, 17th of July, 1856. It is particularly and earnestly requested that all sailors, &c., visiting this island, will note in this book any information they may have collected during their passages which may be of use to the mariner while threading his way through the Barrier Reefs; and when this book is complete to transmit it by the first and safest opportunity to the Secretary of the Admiralty, London (Hydrographer).

It would be of the utmost benefit if captains of ships would on entering the Barrier get an observation for latitude.

The *Torch* steamer called here and anchored on the 17th of July, 1856, twenty-two days from Newcastle, Sydney, N.S.W. The weather has been in general fine, with strong S.E. trades, and occasionally a thick and rainy day. No vessels have been seen, and few natives. She came the Inner Route from Sydney. No sickness on board. Letters have been left for conveyance to Sydney for the Governor-General, for the Australian Exploring Expedition, and for Capt. Browne.

Onions, potatoes, and pumpkins have been planted in the most available spots, for the use of those who may be cast away in this vicinity. It is to be hoped others not in distress will follow this example.

The *Torch*, Mr. Watson, owner, with Lieut. Chimmo on board, sails to-morrow for the Albert River, Gulf of Carpentaria, to search for the North Australian Expedition; thence to the Victoria River, for a similar purpose, as well as to look after the schooner *Tom Tough*; therefore let all passers by have an eye to this, and aid if opportunity offers.

Government provisions in quantities will be found in the cave on the lee side of the island. Wells of fresh water are to be found on the weather side of the island.

The Post Office is removed to a more secure spot in the cave with

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the provisions. A cask will be found (water tight) marked "Post Office by Torch, 1856," with notices for passers by and letters for transmission.

A flag-staff is erected by *Torch*, 20 feet high, on the most elevated part of the island, with a flag flying on it, to attract the attention of ships passing.

Copy of notice left for Mr. Gregory or any member of the N.A.E.E., Booby Island, 17th July, 1856.

The *Torch*, steam-vessel, under the guidance of Lieut. W. Chimmo, has been sent to render assistance to the above expedition by his Excellency the Governor-General of New South Wales.

The steamer leaves Booby Island this day with provisions and dispatches, intending to call first at the Albert River, whence, if no traces of this expedition are to be found, she will proceed to the Victoria River, tracing the coast along the West of Carpentaria Gulf,—along the North coast from the Wessel Islands to Port Essington, (perhaps call there,) and from thence down the East coast to the Victoria River, where Lieut. C. hopes to find the expedition in health and favourably progressing.

A notice was also left for the Governor-General of New South Wales, apprising him of my arrival and future movements.

While I was taking my observations for the correction of the chronometers, a party had erected a flag-staff with a flag on it, and the carpenter, under the superintendance of Mr. Watson, was fitting the New Post Office. Books were added to the library by the Chief Officer of the *Torch*, with the hope that they would pass away a dreary hour for the shipwrecked sailor.

All being complete, we left this retreat, in some measure represented in the sketch.

Cave on Booby Island.—Provisions for the Shipwrecked.

The anchor was tripped, the ship's head turned south, and I contemplated with anxious feelings the task I was about to perform.

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There lay before me an expanse of water of 81,000 miles area; discovered in 1663, its shores were traced by Flinders in 1802. Its southern portion was surveyed by Stokes in 1841. But between the meridians of 137° and 141° 30′, and the parallels of 11° and 17°, embracing 81,000 square miles of water, many have regretted they had not an opportunity of seeing.

It has been stated that "land exists in this gulf." I quote from Stokes' Voyages, vol. ii. p. 328.—"After the S.W. monsoon had set in strongly, numbers of cocoa-nuts are thrown on the N.W. shore of the Gulf of Carpentaria. In the year 1839, a small proa was driven off the coast of Timor Laut, during the N.W. monsoon, the wind blowing hard drifted them to the S.E. for three days and three nights, when they came to a low island with no traces of inhabitants, and abounding in cocoa-nut trees, upon the fruit of which they lived until the monsoon changed, when they sailed back to Timor Laut. Flinders, when off Batavia River on the N.E. side of the gulf, was led to suppose that an island existed to seaward of him, from seeing some flocks of geese coming from that direction one morning. Wilson also, in his Voyage round the World, speaks of the Macassar people reporting an island in the Gulf of Carpentaria with sandal wood on it."

With these prospects of new discoveries I certainly did feel proud at being the first to traverse these waters, and to find from day to day that I was going over regions hitherto unexplored; and I must also add that I felt very much indebted to Capt. John Washington, the Admiralty Hydrographer, for having nominated me for the service about to be performed, although perhaps the prospect of such a glorious track as this was not contemplated, as the Victoria River in the Cambridge Gulf was supposed to be head quarters.

Anticipating therefore seeing something new, (if but water,) I had a constant look out from the most elevated part of the mast-head, and took our departure from Endeavour Strait; but at 10h. p.m. we anchored for the night in 10 fathoms, finding that we were under the influence of a tide.

At five the next morning, the 19th of July, with a breeze fresh from E.S.E. we made all sail. There was an unusually disturbed sea, with the wind heading us from S.E. and South; 16 to 26 fathoms, sand and mud; great quantities of seaweed seen; several tern, frigate-birds, and a tropic bird, porpoises, and flying-fish, were our occasional companions. But the novelty of sailing in unfathomed waters, suggested the idea of towing a drag overboard. At the first haul we obtained some curious specimens, which were duly preserved. This amusement, besides that of looking out for new land, was varied on the 23rd by a visit from a large muster of boobies, which settled on the rigging and about the ship, until the crew became tired of catching them for amusement, and letting them fly from the deck, which was difficult. Several turtle were also seen about. During the night the wind increased, and, as the moon rose, became a gale, to which the sails had to be furled. The sea also very heavy.

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By my noon observation we had been set considerably to the Westward among the Pellew Islands, in the S.W. part of the gulf, having seen nothing of any new land.

At sunset the weather moderated, and we saw for the first time "smokes," which set us speculating whether they were from civilized or uncivilized mortals.

To our mortification and surprise it came on again to blow with renewed effort, and we were compelled to lay to, the sea as before getting up very suddenly. The wind was more from the Southward (S.S.E.) At daylight we had no more cheering prospect. There seemed no chance of a change, and we were within a few miles of our destination without being able to reach it.

On the next day the gale had subsided, but the weather we had was very different to that experienced by the *Beagle*, where, during the same month and almost the same day, they had generally calms at night, wind from S.E.

On Sunday the 27th the noon position proved we had been set to the Westward the last twenty-four hours half a mile per hour. And as it appeared that we were losing precious moments in endeavouring to get to windward, I determined, if no favourable change came, to get up steam next day; it is but twenty-four hours distant, whereas under sail it is impossible to say when the vessel may reach it, I think this would be a saving to government, although in opposition to my "charter party." Accordingly at noon the following day the *Torch* was under steam, and passed through quantities of sea saw-dust of only *one* species, resembling a grain of linseed, and not smelling unlike it, containing a great quantity of animal matter. On decomposition taking place it turned an emerald green,—unlike the last fourteen kinds, which turned pink.

At daylight, on the 29th, Rocky Islet, the sentinel of Isle Mornington, was N.N.E. of us three miles, and the low sand bank on its western side somewhat nearer. The islet is a low flat rock standing on some loose dark material, about 20 feet in elevation. The sand spit or rather islet, for it is nearly of the same elevation, appeared to be a mass of conglomerate of coral, sand, and shells; its position with regard to the rock appears to be in error.

Isle Mornington, a low wooded island, was to the Southward of us as we were taking every advantage of a dead calm.

The natives appeared now to have made out the *Torch* to be a *stranger*, and began to light their fires in all directions to attract us to them. Turtle were occasionally seen asleep on the water, and numerous gannet passing to seaward for their daily allowance of fish.

We were now passing easterly along the North side of Mornington Isle, and much outside Flinders' track, in irregular soundings from 12 to 6 and 20 fathoms, when suddenly a shoal was seen ahead, and which from its discoverer I have for the present called "Watson's Patch," having only a few feet water on it; it is three miles from the nearest land. Flinders must have passed inside of it without seeing it.

After being diverted from our course to avoid coral ledges, and

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alarmed by shoals as well as made nervous by muddy water, collections of sea saw-dust having the appearance of coral reefs, and numerous eddies and similar nautical varieties, which kept us on the alert with our lead, we anchored at 5h. p.m. off Bountiful Island, (of Flinders,) S.E. of the N.E. part of Isle Mornington. We had now but a few gallons of water remaining, and it was absolutely necessary that some should be obtained. Therefore, before dawn of the next day, the 30th of July, all boats were away looking for water; none was found with the exception of two brackish water holes; but it was a great consolation to know that if the North Australian Exploring Expedition called here, although disappointed in water there would be abundance of turtle awaiting them on the beach at low water. The crew of the *Torch* turned and brought on board twenty-nine turtle from eight to ten in the evening.

During the rambles of the crew they came across some graves; and one turtle was found turned above high water mark, a circumstance which excited our curiosity. Having ascertained that some of the crew had incautiously indulged themselves in eating of the pod of a creeper much resembling our broad bean, on their return on board, after pointing out the danger they were in of poisonous effects, I made them all swallow an emetic. I took good care that for their sakes it should be effectual, so it was not very long before a series of operations commenced similar to those common to our Dover packets. But instead of the rueful faces displayed in them over the steward's basins, waiting for the first shot, as it is technically termed, my men made light work of it, although they had enough that time to make them cautious in future not to eat "everything they see." The creeper *might* not have been poisonous, but as they were all very much frightened, and did not recover their dosing until next day, the lesson was well administered.

At nine the following morning, disappointed in our search for water, we left our anchorage for Sweers Island, to the Southward, where I knew that if the *Investigator's* well was no more, that of the *Beagle's* would at all events be found. In my passage down I took a more off shore track than that of the *Beagle*, and was enabled to add another line of soundings to this chart. After rounding Locust Rock in very irregular depths, from 12 to 3 and 6 fathoms, hauled up N.W. ½ W. for Investigator Road, placing another line of soundings in a blank space and in the immediate approach to the roadstead.

At sunset we anchored in 3 fathoms, within two cable's lengths of the sand spit, and although dark at once landed to see if the well dug by the *Beagle*, fifteen years previous, contained water. On landing we found that natives had preceded us, their tracks were plainly visible, and they had left a bundle of wood for fire or signals on the spit; they had taken a canoe with them into the wood, and had evidently come from Bentinck Island. It was too dark even to find the well, so I had to return on board, where we had but seventy gallons left, the greater portion of which was unfit for use, the sediment of all the other tanks having deposited in it.

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Before day dawned on the 31st of July, all hands were on shore looking for water. About a mile East of our anchorage we found what remained of the *Investigator's* well, completely blocked up, to be distinguished only by a slight undulation in the ground: traces of natives were seen under almost every tree. Sticks for erecting tents or huts were lying about, tied up with grass-cord, and bundles of sticks ready for burning. It was not long before we all assembled beneath THE TREE, which still plainly bore the inscriptions of the "Investigator and Beagle;" the former fifty-four years since, the latter fifteen: and here we indulged in a glass of the "Queen's own," to the memory of the adventurous and intrepid Flinders, and to the health (I hope) of the next follower of his footsteps, Capt. J. L. Stokes, R.N., with all the honours due to the occasion. The *Torch's* name was *not* added, for if all did the same the original would soon be obliterated, which I hold to be next to sacriligious, considering that the original and originator stand alone as long as wind and weather will permit.

On our return to the spit we picked up a piece of a lower deck mess plate, (China,) as well as a metal inkstand of European manufacture with the lid gone: it is about nine inches long, by five wide, by three deep, figured on the outside,—leaves of trees that would puzzle a botanist,—which will form a valuable or rather most interesting relic for the British Museum. It was found at high water mark (by Mr. Watson, owner of the *Torch*, to whom I am indebted for it) and about a cable's length from "the Tree;" such a thing could hardly be left there by the *Beagle*, and if in the hands of the natives for fifty-four years would have been destroyed if lost or left by the *Investigator*. How it came there was a riddle.

The remains of the *Beagle's* well was found, but full of earth, stones, and wood, whether accidental or intentional I do not know, I hope the former, for I hardly suppose the natives would act in such opposition to their own comfort as to destroy it intentionally; by constantly going up and down for water earth and stones may have fallen in.

Our hearts sunk within us as we gazed on this piece of destruction, and also at the prospect of finding no water. However, gazing did not last long, all tools were brought from the ship, sheers were soon up, and an awning spread, and every one went to work to clear the well. By noon this was done, and the water was dripping into it, (a depth of 25 feet,) through a rock of concreted lime, sand, shells, and pebbles. We were indeed overjoyed, the main-brace was spliced, and that evening we had one ton of water on board, but somewhat brackish. At 8h. p.m. I fired a rocket to attract the attention of any one looking in our direction.

(To be continued.)

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tween this and Rat Island on the S.W. side, a vessel entering the bay must work to gain an in shore berth. Should a vessel be required to anchor when abreast of Rat Island, with the bearing S.W., she will have 4½ fathoms, with a sandy bottom a short half mile from shore.

Choe Bay, is also distinguished in the annals of Great Britain. It was here that in April, 1796, General Sir Ralph Abercrombie landed with a force, supported by a squadron under Rear-Admiral Sir Hugh Christian, for the reduction of the island; and on the 27th of April, 1796, the brave generals Sir Ralph Abercrombie and Sir John Moore were received by the Choe beach, and St. Lucia, after a severe struggle, was subdued. Taking a retrospective view all around, St. Lucia has an interest of which the absorbing pursuits of time can never divest it; who can forget those days and the heroes that upheld the honour of our flag, when the world was arrayed against us? Every inch of ground they trod is sacred to their memory! and here, when the hills of St. Lucia, that now appear so enticing and placid, were sending forth a deadly fire, shall we not remember the men, who, with undaunted courage, marched to their summit and made the mours? To an Englishman every guava bush and soursop tree has an interest viewed as an evergreen monument planted by nature to mark the grave of many a brave but nameless hero, who fell in the cause of liberty and his country!

I regret to observe that our charts* of the coast of St. Lucia are very imperfect, and some of the directions lead a stranger to suppose that the little village of Gros Islet is the capital of the island, instead of Castries, which is five miles further to the South-West. The carenage or harbour of Castries, it is to be observed, is a blind one, and particularly so to a stranger, for nothing can be seen of it in coming from the windward or leeward sides until quite abreast of its narrow entrance. The Vigia, a bluff point, on which there is a signal-post, is its northern boundary. In running down along shore from Pigeon Island, and half a mile from shore, the flag-staff and look out house, on the summit of the Vigia, are conspicuous objects. Further to the Southward and beyond the Vigia, the garrison buildings on Morne Fortune will be seen, and are useful in helping a stranger to discover the harbour.

(To be continued.)

VOYAGE OF H.M.S.V. "TORCH,"—*Lieut. W. Chimmo, R.N., Commanding,—from Sydney to the Gulf of Carpentaria.*

(Continued from page 320.)

In our rambles on the West side of the island we discovered the remains of a Malay proa, at high water mark, the beams of which

* A defect not likely to be remedied at present, as we have no surveyors in the West Indies, and we look in vain for even the coast-line of the island.—ED.

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were teak. We concluded she had been cast away during the N.W. monsoon; her beam was 17 feet; length could not be ascertained. By the afternoon we had completed water (although somewhat brackish) to about five tons; and in return deposited pumpkin seeds and Indian corn round the well, where the soil was rich; cut our vessel's name on a log of wood across the well, and bade it adieu, after leaving a full account of our visit, the object we had in view, and our intended movements.

With the intention of examining Albert River for the object of our visit, at 2h. p.m. we made sail for the mouth, watched by the natives who were on Bentinck Island, gazing at us with astonishment to see a vessel move through the water by "smoke." To this we attributed their shyness.

Although at daylight the next morning (2nd of August) we shifted position nearer to the mouth of the river, in 2 fathoms, we were still six or seven miles distant, when suddenly a North wind with a dense fog threw a veil over our prospects, leaving us time to prepare the boats. Soon, however, it cleared away, and left us to carry forward out plans.

At first I had intended to send the two mates on this service; but on second thoughts I could not resist taking the galley with five men, a motley crew, which for their own sakes ought to be duly recorded here.

Charles Petersen, a Swede, originally "fancy man" in a toy-shop.
David Kerry, a sailor and Scotchman, tenant of the Duke of Argyle.
George Barton, a hairdresser and unfortunate gold-digger.
James Lussoni, an Italian, descendant of the old Genoese merchants.
James Anderson, "runaway man of war" and worn out.

Mr. Marshall Williams, the Second Officer, in the whale-boat had also five men.

William Hursey, an exile of New Zealand.
Lewis Johnson, American, long time in the possession of the natives of King George Sound.
Thomas Glover, a specimen of a discontented growler.
Charles M'Casky, a cockney, an unsuccessful digger, sings a song.
John Jones, was at the Diggings, subject to apoplexy.

But most of these are what a man-of-war's man would term *purser's names;* that is, borrowed until worn out and no longer serviceable, as articles of clothing are taken up from the purser. Falstaff himself might have mustered a more ragged crew, but not a more motley one of race and origin, to say nothing of qualifications.

The boats were victualled for six days; armed with a brass one-pounder swivel in the bows, each man with a musket and pistol, and forty rounds of ammunition, rockets, blue lights, and portfires in proportion. Thus provided and ready to meet a host of hostile natives, at ten we made sail to a light North wind on our interesting cruize for the river.

I had nearly forgotten the colours we were to sail under; but happily in my boat was a new "blue silk ensign," which very soon gracefully floated over our little party. It was a beautiful piece of

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work, and had come from the hands of three of "Ireland's fairest daughters," on my appointment to the *Torch* in 1852, with a promise that it should only be displayed on "special occasions." Was not this one of them!

After leaving the ship we steered W.S.W. for the entrance of the river (or rather for the high trees on the Island to the West of the entrance.) These were supposed to be Flinders' trees whether they are so or not, being the conspicuous objects (as Capt. Stokes also observes) about here, and if they are Flinders' they are not in their proper places. When the river opened South of us, we made *all* sail, spreading the awnings for studding sails, and the spare hammocks for topsails, with a light North wind, the tide running against us two knots per hour. At one p.m. we entered the river, and pursued our course up the stream. When about six miles from its mouth the evening set in; the sunset was grand and imposing, but too much so to last, for the time was an instant; no twilight! and all was darkness, leaving us only a few minutes to look for a place to bivouac. This was no easy task, for the whole shores were lined with mangroves, behind a beach of soft mud. One place, however, a little clearer than the rest, offered us a retreat. The boats were secured to the mangrove trees, and in about five minutes a blazing fire announced that we had encamped on this spot. Here, before retiring for the night, a rocket was fired and answered by the ship,—a preconcerted signal,—telling all was well. The men slept on shore on a tarpaulin, with the sails for awnings. The officers in the boats, with the awnings spread; the watch looking out. But, alas!

> "As sparks fly upward to the sky,
> So man is born to misery."

All had yet gone smoothly, but unhappily about midnight the whale-boat filled up to her thwarts, by which a bag of bread, all her fresh provisions, sugar, &c., were spoiled; and Mr. Williams was awakened from his dreams by finding his boots full of water. If all the capes, inlets, and creeks, were not already called Disaster, Accident, &c., this mud bank would have been well named so.

Before daylight we were moving, the flood tide having commenced, and fortunately when it turned left us the legacy of a gentle N.E. wind.

The thermometer in the sun to day was 122°.

The salt water arm of the river was passed without seeing one native. During the dinner hour the whale-boat, which had proved leaky, was hauled on the bank, turned up, and when quite dry her seams (which were much open) stuffed up with soap and the inside part of piecrust, which answered well, and prevented her playing us a similar trick. As the evening closed in the boats were hauled on the sandy spit of Island Reach, the first spot since entering the river where one could land without sinking to the knees in mud, although we were now twenty miles from the entrance.

The fire was soon blazing on the spot where not many minutes before natives had encamped, and we found a store of wood all ready

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for us. In hopes of meeting with natives I wandered away a short distance, but they had all fled, and a small kangaroo was the only stranger seen.

About eight in the evening, when dark, a rocket was fired, to announce to any of the North Australian Expedition that a party was at hand in search of them. In fact this, which was the chief object of our expedition, was also the theme of general conversation. The boats' crews concluded without a question that Mr. Gregory must be found at the head of the river; one would give him this, another that, others would go without grog and tea, so that they might have plenty. Every tree, creek, shrub, island, and beach, were well scrutinized, in the hope of discovering some signal that would lead us to the persons of whom we were in search; and although I was convinced that our search would be fruitless, I encouraged the desire of who should be first to discover traces, and looked out as eagerly as the rest for them. Frequently as we passed the banks the exclamation,—there's a mark, there's a stick; listen, there's a gun! would be heard from either boat. Our hopes were at one time raised by the sudden appearance of a dog; and without thinking there were such animals in Australia, all exclaimed at once,—"There they are!" when soon after his master appeared in the shape of a native with his spear.

We all enjoyed this sandy beach, at which we arrived in the evening, on which we could have as much exercise as we pleased, for we had not been on shore for forty-six days; and it was a curious coincidence that on this very day (4th of August, 1840) Captain Stokes, when in command of the *Beagle*, was ascending the river at precisely the same spot!

Before daylight the next morning we were *en route*, and now we began to feel the inconvenience of thirst, our principal stock having been lost by the unfortunate accident to the boat. However a fresh S.E. trade wafted the boats along through some of the reaches with great velocity, alarming the whistling ducks and here and there a native in our progress.

The river was still salt, although I had expected to find it fresh much sooner, and we were in consequence without water for breakfast or dinner, and the boats' crews were suffering from constantly tasting the river water to ascertain if it were fresh. In the midst of our cares about 4 p.m. we landed, and found a muddy water-hole, containing about a gallon of—water (I was about to say), but it was a mixture exactly resembling preserved milk, and yet it was with much difficulty that the men could be prevented from taking large draughts of it. Two of them suffered much from it, as it appeared to contain a quantity of magnesia. It produced giddiness as well as other unpleasant sensations; but fortunately I had brought with me some medicines, which relieved them from the effects of the cream, as they called it, which they had so inconsiderately taken.

As we were pursuing our way up the river, and in order to avoid the tide were keeping close to one of the banks, a huge alligator suddenly sallied off it and disappeared in the river. Waiting for the whale-

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boat, to place the crew on their guard against these visitors, I was about to tell them of it when the monster reappeared with his jaws against the side of the boat, and within six inches of where my elbow was resting; no doubt he had been attracted there by the sleeve of my white jacket. The next instant found me on my legs ready for a shot, but he was gone. Still we waited his reappearance, and in a few minutes were not disappointed. My gun snapped. Mr. Williams fired, and lodged a ball in the fleshy part under the cheek. He writhed and slashed the water furiously, until he appeared exhausted and sank, and we proceeded on our way satisfied with our exploit. Many more were seen during the day, but none afforded so much sport as the first. It was very difficult to distinguish them from floating logs of drift wood; their huge prominent eyes were the only unmistakeable features. They rose to the surface very gently, only showing the nose, eyes, and the crown of the head. But the first alligator which I saw in Albert River made an impression on me which I shall never forget.

At five in the evening, parched, tired, and weary, we arrived at the head of the Albert River, and having first examined the West arm, which was choked and impassable from dead trees, we followed the Southern one until the boat had scarcely turning room. Although disappointed in not finding Mr. Gregory and his party, we were rewarded by a supply of fresh water, having been long enough without it under a scorching sun to know by experience the misery of such a privation. Here we had a treat indeed, in abundance of excellent spring water; and those only who have been deprived of it under the circumstances we had been, knew how to appreciate the happiness it restored to our party.

I was now compelled to conclude that the *Tom Tough* with Mr. Gregory had not been here.

The remains of native fires recently extinguished were about us as we lighted our own on the elevated tongue of land which divided the arms of the river, fifty miles from our vessel; and the grass having been burnt around for many miles, fortunately for us, prevented our being surprised.

The boats were hauled off, the watch was set, and we were all glad indeed of a few hours' rest after our fatigues of the day.

But wearied as we were and in need of rest, our night was not free from care. In the boats our slumbers were now and then disturbed by the momentary expectation of an alligator's paw on the gunwale, and finding the water rushing over it as the weight of these monsters would bear it down. This was no pleasant inducement to sleep. Nor did the cry of night birds, the laughing jackass, or the hooting of owls, contribute to lull our senses;—but they all combined to help the wandering imagination, and with a jumble of alligators, night-birds, jackasses, and owls gradually fading away in visions, we slept as soundly under the care of a look out man in each boat, as we should have done in the best feather-bed ever prepared for us in England.

The morning of the 5th of August found us at our furthest en-

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campment on the Albert River. While the necessary preparations were being made for breakfast, a short ramble over the plains afforded me an opportunity of being disappointed with them. They did not present to me that boundless luxuriance which I had been led to expect.

The whole country around was parched and arid, the long grass appeared to have been recently burned, whether by accident or design by the natives with the view of killing kangaroos and snakes for food was a subject for speculation. The large gum and acacia trees (except those overhanging the river) wore an autumnal dress. The land was furrowed by the deluge of waters in the rainy season, leaving huge trees rooted up and lying entangled with each other, the finest of the soil being thus transported to the river, and leaving on the surface of "the plains" a few flattened porphyritic stones, with quantities of perfectly round ironstone particles varying in size from one tenth to half an inch; and thus neither the importance of the stream nor the richness of the country, although now seen under the most promising and favourable circumstances, left any pleasurable impression. But this was in the winter, and the S.E. trade blowing. What it would present in the summer, during the N.W. monsoon hot winds and heavy rains, varied by a burning sun occasionally, may be imagined.

In the course of our rambles no sign appeared of an European encampment, nor any traces of white people having visited this place. I therefore concluded that the Australian Exploring Expedition, of whom I was in search, had not been here.

In the event of any of Mr. Gregory's party coming after us, a notice was secured in a bottle to inform them of my intended movements. It was suspended on an overhanging branch of the largest and most conspicuous tree, plainly to be seen by a boat coming up the river, but not by the natives on shore; on this same tree were cut in large letters the ship, date, &c.

Here, on this point Aridity, where only very recent traces of the aborigines were found by us, I left a spare bag of biscuits, also some pipes and tobacco, of which latter I do not think they know the use.

Our mission up the Albert River having thus been completed, we commenced without regret our passage downwards. As we passed the palm trees, they were such conspicuous objects that we hung a bottle containing a notice for Gregory on the summit of the highest (under the leaves in the spot occupied by the fruit). The tree was about sixty feet high, and it required considerable efforts and perseverance to reach the top of it under a temperature of 110°. Besides attracting attention, which the palm tree does, I considered the bottle would derive safety from the natives knowing there was no fruit to be obtained from the tree.

A small elevated spot, covered with long grass and a deep red bulbous creeper, afforded us a resting place for the night. Behind us were lagoons of brackish water fringed with dwarf mangroves, and here and there neat native bridges across the narrow parts. There

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appeared to be abundance of wild fowl, and recent marks of natives; dead muscles shells, feathers of birds, and bundles of wood for fires, attested their vicinity! but we saw nothing of them, and had no desire for anything but rest.

Before the dawn of day on the 6th, we were again in our boats, and assisted by the ebb were making good progress, when suddenly up started a party of natives on the North bank, whose numbers soon increased to twenty-nine. They were all provided with spears, bomerangs, waddies, and shields, and broke out with so much noise and clamour, that I expected every moment nothing less than the bomerang whirling at us that the chief held in his hand. Two muskets were loaded without their perceiving it, in case of such an event. They endeavoured, by the most exciting gestures they could make, to induce us to land; but this I was not inclined to do. However, with the view of leaving a good impression on them for those who might come after us, I made signs to him that all his party should remove to a distance, and I would come and speak to him. This he did, and they all at once sat down on a small elevation, and watched our proceedings intently. The boats were now backed in, and presents of biscuits, pipes, tobacco, and fish-hooks, were made to him. But his delight was beyond bound when a large coloured pocket handkerchief was presented to him. He seemed distracted with joy, wrapping it first round his waist, then round his head, dancing most vigorously in the mud all the time, as well as its soft nature permitted him, for he sunk almost at every step or jump up to his knees. He cared not for his waddy, bartering it freely. In fact, a free trade had dispelled every symptom of anger, and we had become excellent friends. Their demonstration of violence most probably arose from an idea that every intruder they saw was an enemy.

As we continued our course down the river, after this friendly exchange of civilities instead of hostile demonstrations, they followed us on the bank, by which we had ample opportunity for observing them. The usual sign of the eye-tooth being removed indicating that they have arrived at a marriageable age (generally sixteen or seventeen) was remarked. Some had horizontal scars along the body, about five or six inches long, gradually lessening from the chest downwards, and altogether their appearance was by no means agreeable. I considered we had managed them fortunately, for a single act of hostility would have turned the tide of events. They had no women among them, which was a sure sign that their visit was not for peace. They kept company with us for fifteen miles along the banks of the river, until a creek prevented any further communication, when we gave them some parting presents, another coloured handkerchief, &c., in exchange for anything they had, and we parted excellent friends.

By the evening we had reached to about six miles from the entrance, and determined to pass the night there! We accordingly landed, while thousands of fish, somewhat resembling the mullet and smelt, were jumping out of the water around us, reminding us that we were without a seine.

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Having now examined the Albert River, I should describe it as a very unimportant stream, the banks of which, for the first few miles from its mouth, are formed of mud covered with a dense mangrove bush, the monotony of which is slightly broken here and there by a few independent gum and acacia trees. Then assuming a South and S.W. direction, patches of cliff from ten to thirty feet high divide the mangroves, and change the scene, although small mangrove islets, with sandy spits, appear at low water. At forty miles up the river a complete change is evident; there is no vestige of a mangrove, but gum trees and acacias, with an occasional palm, the banks of the river with bamboos, rushes, creepers, and long grass. The river is in general tortuous, presenting at low water a far different aspect to that when the tide is high. At high water snags, dead trees, sand banks, mud banks, embryo islets forming round sunken logs, are all covered, and an unbroken sheet of water is then presented to the eye, that contrasts remarkably with the scene presented at low water.

The maximum last night was 67°, the minimum 55°.

In the evening the *Torch's* preconcerted signal was seen and answered by us. In the course of the night I was suddenly seized with sickness, and in the morning became worse, with symptoms of fever, and at early dawn directed the boats to be got ready, determined on hastening our return to the ship, and rejoicing that we were so near her.

As the boats moved along, I recollected having the evening before visited the deserted native huts close to our encampment; about four feet high, with the opening to the S.E., that would just admit a man, and the fire-place at the entrance.

We were soon at the mouth of the river, and by noon found ourselves once more on board the *Torch*.

To all of us, and especially myself, very unwell, this was a happy return; for ours had been no trip of pleasure! Exposed in light open boats, unsuited like their crews for detached service, half our provisions lost, our water short, and under a constant infliction of flies and mosquitoes, threatened by alligators and natives, and cramped in a small boat for six days, the thermometer 124° in the sun, and down to 55° at night;—these are not the conditions of pleasure parties, but rather tests for the constitution of a stranger to meet the call of duty; and this performed, the conclusion of our expedition was welcome.

It was however gratifying to know that this portion of the task was done; that any of Mr. Gregory's party or his schooner had not been here, a result I had anticipated from the first. But our visit will have the good effect of conciliating the natives, who will be in some measure accustomed to the white faces of those who follow us.

In the evening I had sufficient strength to walk the deck and make preparations for leaving the Gulf at daylight the next morning.

(To be continued.)

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VOYAGE OF H.M.S.V. "TORCH,"—*Lieut. W. Chimmo, R.N., Commanding,—from Sydney to the Gulf of Carpentaria and Victoria River.*

(Continued from page 368.)

At sunrise on the 8th of August, after getting the vessel's head on sixteen points of the compass, to obtain the deviation on each, we tripped our anchor and made sail with her head once more to the northward, to leave, with no regret, the Gulf of Carpentaria. The wind was light from S.E. which afterwards came round to N.E., fell calm at midnight, with heavy dews; then S.W. and S.E. at sunrise. Our progress was therefore slow.

During the last few days the winds seem to have daily gone round the compass. Commencing at S.E. as the sun rises, they gain strength with the sun, drawing round to East and N.E. as the sun declines, then to the northward; at midnight a calm of short duration, followed by very light airs from N.W., West, and S.W., until daylight, when it again assumes its S.E. direction as the sun appears on the horizon. These appear to be the characteristics of the winds in the depth of the gulf when the S.E. trade or monsoon is not fresh.

The morning of the 10th brought us a dense fog, lasting seven hours, and when it cleared away Bountiful Island lay before us, N.N.W. In the afternoon again becalmed. At sunset light N.W. wind; Grassy Hill N.W. about seven miles.

This morning (11th) a few minutes before daylight I was suddenly called to look at "land close to the ship." To the N.E. of the vessel was a dark mass apparently close to us, the extremes on the horizon being S.E. and N.W. There was a gentle breeze from the S.W., and a heavy dew had been falling all night. A sandy beach was plainly visible beneath the land, which appeared in peaks, and seemed to be formed of mountains apparently 3,000 or 4,000 feet high. The anchor was ordered to be cleared immediately for letting go.

I now began to consider that there was no land in the gulf so elevated. The land of Bountiful Island, near which we ought to be, was not half so high as our mast-heads. When all at once, in the midst of my deliberations, the mass began to ascend (it may have been doing so before, but we did not perceive it), quickly changing its outline and form, and as day dawned a sudden puff from the N.E. passed over us, to which we reduced our canvas—its force, however, was not more than three to four; some rain passed North of us, and a light northerly wind put an end to the deception.

This is the third squall, with its strange accompaniment that we have had. The phenomenon was extremely grand and was more imposing when assisted by the darkness of night. The dense body of vapour, so exactly resembling lofty peaked land, and it was the dawn of day in the East that gave the appearance of a sandy beach underneath. However, no changes in barometer or thermometer, but a heavy dew falling all the time, and it had been preceded by brilliant

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meteors. The mass was gradually rolled up before the wind and after passing the zenith settled down in the S.W. horizon, but small particles of cloud, not connected with the main body, were exceedingly agitated and quick in motion, flying about in all directions until quietly dispersed by the light N.N.E. wind that ensued.

With the assistance of the ebb tide, setting North, we endeavoured to get to windward against light and variable N.W. and N.E. winds; but at eight we were compelled to anchor about six miles S.S.E. of our old acquaintance, Bountiful Island, to avoid being drifted to the southward by the flood tide, as our fate had been last night.

This was enough to try the patience of any one, interested or not. On endeavouring to enter the gulf we had to contend with light S.E. winds and calms. On going out we meet the reverse, light N.E. and N.W. winds along with calms; our progress must therefore be tardy.

This evening we caught a dwarf male shark, eight feet in length. He had no parasites on his liver. In his stomach were portions of turtle, crabs, and other odds and ends, with a few circular gelatinous perforated plates about the size of a shilling,—puzzling us amazingly to account for them.

At daylight on the 12th we had a similar squall to that of yesterday; but, happening a few minutes later, it had not that imposing appearance imparted to it by darkness that the previous one presented.

We were now close to Bountiful Island. The wind being light and adverse, I landed and placed a notice on an elevated whitewashed staff, one of the *Torch's* late beacon-staffs, with her name cut deeply on it, intended for Mr. Gregory and his party. It was to the effect that we were in search of them; that, not having found them in the Albert River, we were on our way to the Victoria; that water was on Sweer Island, and that turtle were in abundance on this. While thus employed, the boat's crew turned and brought on board twenty-one turtle without any difficulty. Having left the foregoing notice of our visit, I had just time enough to visit the graves, of which I had previously heard from one of the boat's crew.

In the midst of a hard sandy patch of ground near the centre of the island, we discovered the complete skeletons of five persons, who appeared to have died the victims of starvation, after having been cast away. They all lay in the same position with their heads to the North, and it appeared no attempt had been made at forming a grave for them, the drift sand having accumulated about the bodies—thus Nature performed what man had left undone. They had no spears or other weapons or any implements near them; a few turtle bones and dead shells of the haliotus and helix were in heaps about them. The front teeth of the upper jaw were perfect in all, showing that they were not natives of Australia. We concluded that they were probably a portion of the crew of the Malay proa, the remains of which we found on Sweer Island. The North Australians generally bury their dead in trees or caves, wrapped up in bark or matting, and with their heads to the eastward, and have always some of their war or fishing implements near them. These remnants of humanity were without

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any of these forms of funeral ceremonies, and I directed them to be carefully covered again with sand.

We returned on board at 10.30 a.m., and made sail to a light adverse wind, having only the assistance of the ebb tide to the North to help us along, and, as a variety in our day's work, we caught another shark, having in his stomach nineteen inches of the back-bone of the shark taken yesterday, and a shoulder-bone of turtle.

As we drew to the northward by the morning of the 14th our prospects of leaving the gulf became a little brighter, for it brought us a fresh and pleasant breeze from the eastward, which carried us with it at the rate of two or three miles per hour; but, as usual, it went down with the sun, and was followed by a light S.W. air.

We here availed ourselves of the opportunity of ascertaining the transparency of the sea by means of a plate nine inches in diameter. This was lowered, and was seen sixty-six feet below the surface, exactly half the depth of water—twenty-three fathoms, sand and mud. Scarcely was this completed when seven sharks were about us at once. Two of them were hooked at a time; one of which measured nine feet in length, and contained the usual meal in his stomach. The thin perforated gelatinous plates before-mentioned, and which had assumed such a contorted shape, were the vertebræ of the same fish. A great quantity of oil was collected from the livers of the two sharks we had killed (about two gallons each), which burned well for ship's purposes. The liver was merely allowed to remain in a copper kettle in the sun, and was strained off into oil cans.

On the 17th we were again in new and unexplored waters; the same vigilance commences as before; all eager to get a sight of something new. The mast-head is constantly visited for any new object on the horizon. A small porpoise was caught, the flesh of which was very good and much sought after.

The wind commences further North, being first at N.E., and then East as the sun mounts the sky, freshening as it approaches the meridian, and gradually diminishing in force as it sets, and veering to S.E., South, and, during the night, to S.W., and sometimes W S.W., commencing again with the sun at N.E. and East in the morning.

On the 19th, we had fairly gained the region of the S.E. trades; and at noon we were only sixty-three miles from Cape Wessel, which was then bearing N. 60° W. At five we saw land, bearing N.W., distant about three or four miles. Sounded in 39 fathoms, coral, and hauled up North until morning broke.

None of the charts having a positive sounding in the vicinity of the cape within sixteen miles, that would indicate its vicinity to those coming from the Eastward, I sounded round it on different bearings and at the distance of four or five miles found irregular bottom, with 43 to 25 fathoms, coral, gravel, sand, and mud. These few will nevertheless be a guide to ships shaping a course from Booby Island.

The island to which Cape Wessel belongs is uniformly level, and from forty to fifty feet high, with a perpendicular cliff on its N.E. face. Small sandy bays indent the coast, and a clump of trees here

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and there on its summit interrupt the regularity of its outline. On the West side of the cape is a sandy bay, with a clean appearance, offering anchorage. No natives nor smokes were seen, although the late Adml. King discovered some in 1819.

In the voyage of the *Beagle*, vol. ii., p. 330, an error in the latitude of the cape is attributed to its not having been seen at the distance of eleven miles. The cape is in its proper latitude, which I found to be 10° 59′ 7″ South, and it was plainly seen at the distance of seventeen miles and a half from the deck, bearing then E.b.S. ½ S. magnetic.

After obtaining my sights for a meridian distance, I steered a course due West that would enable me to fill in a space where soundings were necessary, and these were added to the chart.

In compliance with the terms under which the *Torch* was hired, she was now made over for the present to her owner, Mr. Watson, who had accompanied us, although I still continued to navigate her, by which I was enabled to pass over blank spaces on the chart, without occasioning any delay whatever to the vessel's progress. The *Torch* had been thirty days under sail, four under steam, in the gulf, her expense being £732 to the Government.

On the 21st we found ourselves fourteen miles North of our latitude at noon, and attributed it to rounding the vessel to the wind every hour to sound. This I did not regret, as it gave me a broader line of soundings, which were extremely regular, from 25 to 33 fathoms, gradually increasing, the bottom soft mud. The current was therefore about 0·6m. per hour to the westward. I am led to think now, although I have no direct observation to prove it, that the currents partake more of tides, being to the Westward during the day, and to the East during the night, the former being the stronger.

A brisk S.E. wind carried us along all night, with fine weather, freshening occasionally, with all possible sail for the Victoria River.

At noon on the 22nd, we found a trifling current to the Eastward against us, and at 2h. p.m., we passed the entrance of Port Essington, a place associated with my early days in China, when its fame spread among us, and its unhealthiness, compared even with that of the African coast, was spoken of by every one who had friends connected with that settlement. Great discontent and internal bickerings had made it more miserable than it really was.

I regretted much not being able to visit this oven, (as it is called by some writers,) our former capital of North Australia, for an idea has been lurking in my mind, that if Leichardt still exists, (which is not at all probable,) this is the only possible place in which to find him. He knew that he could find provisions there; he knew the place, and he knew the way to it. It appears to me also that it is probable, the vessel, or some portion of the expedition we are now in search of, are there, if they have left the Victoria for the season before the N.W. monsoon commences.

Port Essington, as a harbour, is good and spacious; but as a settlement, as a depôt for steam communication, or a retreat for ship-

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wrecked crews, it is ill adapted. For the first, it is unhealthy! for the second, it is out of the route; and for the latter it is 600 miles from the general scene of such disasters. Moreover, Port Essington is exposed to all the violent ravages of the N.W. monsoons, and receives but a small proportion of the benefits of the fresh S.E. trades. It was here H.M.S. *Pelorus* was fairly blown "into the bush," and twelve brave fellows perished! It was abandoned in 1849, and the persons and stores removed by the *Mæander*, Capt. Hon. H. Keppel. An interesting and detailed account of this "unhappy and unfortunate spot," will be found in the first volume of the voyage of the *Rattlesnake*, as well as in several numbers of the *Nautical Magazine*.

Such was the *fourth* attempt to form a settlement in North Australia, all of which have failed! The *fifth* seems likely to be on Albany Island, Cape York, admirably adapted for it, standing high, and enjoying the full strength of the S.E. trades. What effect the N.W. monsoon has on it, is not yet known; but steam communication *must* pass within a mile of it, and it is in the immediate vicinity of the shipwrecked!

At ten in the forenoon the high white cliffs of Melville Island bore S.W., agreeing with the dead reckoning. The instant we were seen smokes in all directions burst forth.

At noon, the North part of the sand spit was due West, and a good meridian altitude gave the latitude 11° 5′ 2″ S.; it is placed in Capt. Stokes' chart in 11° 6′, and in Capt. King's 11° 4′. There has been quite time for the sand to accumulate, (thirty-four years,) an effect which is more than probable.

The cliffs on a S.W. bearing are white sand; but when they bore South-Easterly, appeared red. On this latter bearing the sand bank was found to have extended fully a mile to the Eastward, the breakers being considerably outside it.

Melville Island, in the vicinity of the cape, is moderately elevated, about 100 feet, and densely wooded, having a face of regular sand cliffs on its N.E. side, and a low red cliff a short distance to the Eastward of the cape, which is a low sandy broken point. Point Piper, the western part of the island, is a bold and nearly perpendicular bluff.

This day the *Torch* again comes into my possession, having been only three days from cape to cape, a distance of 370 miles,—a good run for this latitude.

In the course of the night I was roused by a strange and most unaccountable noise about the vessel. I have heard the singing fish of the East Indies, which adhere by suckers to vessels' bottoms, and keep up a continuous singing all night; but this, which was like the noise of a boiling cauldron, was nothing like theirs. I attribute it to an under stratum of current or tide ripple; but there was none apparent on the surface: it lasted about three hours. Several of the watch below obtained lanthorns, and went round to see where the water was rushing *into* the ship. It was much more plainly heard forward than aft, and only heard below. It was not unlike the trem-

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bling of the ship when the water is about to boil in the boilers on getting the steam up.*

I seldom went on deck with spirits more elevated than I did this morning, the 24th. A fine clear day, an "Australian sunrise," which is so beautiful and still so short, a moderate breeze from the Eastward, and the sea as smooth as Farm Cove, Sydney, with the prospect of reaching the Victoria River in a couple of days. At noon we had been set direct on our course S.W.b.S., twenty miles in eighteen hours, since rounding the Mermaid Bank.

Towards the afternoon the wind gradually fell away, and also drew ahead of us to South and S.W. I determined at once to get the steam up, as we were but twenty-four hours' steaming from the river, and having apparently lost the S.E. trades, and with the warning of the Albert River before us, making good sixty-five miles in five days.

The order for steam and floats was given, and before dark we had all sails furled, and were steaming seven knots an hour, half speed, against a light head wind.

On the morning of the 25th, with alternate feelings of hope and despair in regard to finding Mr. Gregory, and in a dead calm, we were progressing at the rate of seven knots per hour, and finding a set of ten miles in sixteen hours against us, I was glad that I had come to the conclusion of getting up steam, as we passed on merrily over a sea covered apparently with sawdust.

But in the evening finding a current evidently against us, we were compelled to anchor for the night in 14 fathoms; after which, a rocket and blue light were fired, in the hopes that our position would be observed by Mr. Gregory's party.

At daylight the next morning Point Pearce was East about five and a half miles, when we made for it; but from the indistinctness of the outline, and the haze over the land, it was difficult to make out any feature. Passed through the race off the S.W. point, and found 3 fathoms, one less than found by the *Beagle* (when the cliff bore N.E.)

It was at this point that Capt. Stokes, of the *Beagle*, received a spear wound from a treacherous party of natives, which nearly proved fatal, while obtaining observations, on December 7th, 1839.

We passed round the bay in the *Torch* as nearly as we could, and carefully as well as eagerly examined every tree and log which would bear a mark of our people; (it was here they first landed, in September, 1855;) but not yet could we discover a vestige of them. I therefore bore up for the Victoria River. No natives were to be seen with whom I could communicate. They of course had fled at first

* Might it not have been the effect of some internal commotion underground, preparatory to an outburst of lava from a submarine volcano, for the moderate depth the *Torch* was in would place her close over it? All these conditions are similar to those experienced by ships during earthquakes, and it is even recorded that the effect of the great earthquake at Lisbon was felt on board ship far away at sea—those on board imagining that it was immediately beneath them.—Ed.

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sight of our vessel rushing through the water without the aid of sail, smoking like an Australian bush fire, and leaving, besides a tail of smoke, a long boiling bubbling wave behind her. They *were* surprised at seeing the *Beagle*, what would they think of the *Torch!*

We steered S. ½ E. for the entrance of the river, passing close to the S.E. end of the Mermaid Bank, carrying 8 to 10 fathoms, with some casts of no bottom all the way. When Table Hill and Fossil Summit were in one, I sounded closely to ascertain if the *Beagle's* end of the bank extended further. But no less water than 8 fathoms were obtained; it was then half ebb tide.

At noon we entered the Victoria River, between two small dry sand banks. And it is a curious fact, and one that did not pass unnoticed by us, that the *Torch* should be the first steamer to enter this river, and that too on the anniversary of the natal day of her most gracious Majesty's Royal Consort, the river likewise bearing the illustrious name of "Victoria." The *Torch* of course was dressed in all her colours, and at noon a royal salute, the first that found echoes among the mountains of this stream, pealed forth, with cheers from the loyal and devoted subjects of her Majesty embarked in her. These ceremonies were followed by others in due course, and our hopes had fairly overcome our fears that a few hours would bring us to those we were so anxiously in search of. Alas! how little did we think that all our joys would soon be annihilated! that what now was full of joyful promise was in a few minutes to be turned to cheerless, hopeless despondency.

(To be continued.)

The Atlantic Telegraph Cable.

[We are indebted to that intelligent paper the *Daily News* for the substance of this account.]

The preparations for this grand international enterprise are now rapidly approaching completion, and there is every reason to believe that by the beginning of August the *Agamemnon* and *Niagara* will have commenced depositing in the Atlantic the cable which, it is to be hoped, will cement the amicable, political, and commercial relations of England and the United States. Both these vessels have been shipping the cable, one at Birkenhead, where Messrs. Newall and Company are under contract to supply one-half the entire length, and the other a little below Greenwich Hospital, where the other half is being supplied from the works of Messrs. Glass, Elliott, and Co., of East Greenwich. Each firm has undertaken to furnish 1,250 miles, and there will be a surplus which is believed to be amply sufficient to provide for all exigencies and contingencies which it is reasonable to anticipate.

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We had now to move our ship to Vieuxfort Bay, at the S.E. side of the island, and accordingly on the morning of the 24th of March we cast off the moorings from shore, regained our anchor, and proceeded; but before reaching the point of the grand Pitton the wind freshened to a double-reefed topsail breeze, and was coming down from the lofty Pittons in fearful gusts. The current was also found to be running with such velocity to the N.W., that we were glad to take refuge at our old anchorage; so we put back, and with some difficulty were again made fast to the shore at Soufrere by 2h. p.m. Finding that on our last attempt to get to Vieuxfort our ship was too light to work to windward, I engaged boats to bring us some thirty hogsheads from Anse Ivraine Bay, that I had intended to go for in the ship, when a larger shipment would be ready on our return from Vieuxfort. As a knowledge of the currents is of the greatest importance to those who may have to go coastwise to load their cargo at St. Lucia, I shall note down what I have observed of their general characteristics in my next paper on St. Lucia.

VOYAGE OF H.M.S.V. "TORCH,"—*Lieut. W. Chimmo, R.N., Commanding,—from Sydney to the Gulf of Carpentaria and Victoria River.*

(Continued from p. 439.)

As we entered the river the thermometer in the sun was 130°, in the engine-room 118°, and in the stoke-hole 134°. Snags, medusæ, pelicans, and all the uninteresting and muddy portion of the river were passed, along with Quoin Island; but when we reached the sand-bank off Observation Island it was most difficult to tell where the channel really was. However, by keeping near the sand-bank we carried three fathoms with us, altering course to the best of our judgment. We were fairly within the river, and every reach as it became presented to us elicited a general exclamation of "What a lovely river!" and the Victoria really is a noble river.

Entrance Island came in view, which, together with the opposite shore, assumed the appearance of ruined fortifications. Huge blocks of reddish sandstone presented themselves, standing one upon another and forming regular sides of a fractured edifice, looking more like the work of man than that of Nature at some not very distant period. I was tracing closely all these natural curiosities with my glass, when, lo! it fell on a mark! The truth rushed on my mind in an instant—Gregory was gone! His vessel had left the river—all our efforts useless! The orders to port the helm hard, bring ship to an anchor, and lower away the galley, were obeyed as quickly as they were given.

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I landed on the North point of Entrance Island and found, to my mortification, the following notice:—

Victoria River, July, 1856.

The schooner *Tom Tough*, attached to the North Australian Expedition, passed down the river this day on her voyage to Timor, and thence to the Albert River, in the Gulf of Carpentaria, where she will meet Mr. Gregory. On her passage up in September last she grounded on a bank of rocks above Shoal Reach, and, drifting to the sands above Curiosity Peak, did not finally clear them for twenty-eight days, or to about the end of October, when she proceeded up the river to the camp, which had been formed on the 13th about ten miles below Steep Head, on the western side. From this camp Mr. Gregory made one trip up the river in portable boats and two journeys by land; in the last of which he penetrated to 20° 18′ S., and has now started with part of the expedition for the Albert River.

During the detention of the schooner at the camp her frame was strengthened and damages partially repaired by Captain Gourlay; and on leaving it she was laid on a suitable bank near the Dome, caulked, and repairs completed.

Six of the crew were disabled for some time by sickness and John Finlay, the Carpenter, died April the 22nd, 1855 [?6]. His grave is near the bank on which the vessel lay, and from a gouty stem tree near it, with head board and inscription, the following bearings were taken: the Dome, W.N.W.; the Valley, N.N.W.; the points of the Table Hill, N.½E. and N.E.

The detachment of the expedition on board left camp on the 2nd of this month and joined the schooner below the shoals, with the Dome E.N.E., ten miles.

Wood was taken in from the point on the North, and water from the bight about three miles on the other side. The well, which is uncovered only at three-quarters ebb, bears from the Dome W.b.S., and from Curiosity Peak W.N.W. A cask has been sunk. Boats may be laid alongside in the soft mud, and 300 gallons of water filled in each tide.

Letters have been buried in the forge and oven, at the camp, and the places indicated by inscriptions on the trees.

T. T. BAINES, *N. A. Expedition.*

While reading this notice, disappointment, with all its train of withering sensations, were gradually creeping through me! Sixteen thousand long miles had I come at an hour's notice, after being in England only three weeks, to perform this service, and here was the result! To repine was useless, and the next thought was our future disposal. The *Tom Tough* was gone to Timor, Gregory to the Albert River, one month since. I was two months at Sydney, and was now to return home, having effected no earthly good.

On returning on board my plan would have been to proceed at once out of the river for Timor; but there was no chance of seeing

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Gregory there, and letters, according to the notice, having been left at the camp, it appeared to me better to obtain those destined for England, to take home. So we passed the remainder of the day in sober meditations on the short sightedness of poor human nature and moralising on our want of luck. This being, as I have before noticed, the birthday of our illustrious Prince, we had even prepared a good dinner for Gregory and his associates; there were the ten turtle in fine order, too, which were ready for them at Bountiful Island.

On the 27th, at daylight, we proceeded up the river for water, and moored in Holdfast Bay, in the same position occupied by the *Beagle* sixteen years since. Seven natives, having made their "coey," followed us for some distance.

All hands searched in vain for the wells dug by the *Beagle;* but we found two water holes about a mile from the beach, which supplied plenty of good water.

In the course of our search for water we discovered the "playhouse," as it is termed, of the interesting Bower Bird. It is a rare and beautiful specimen of this little artist of Nature's own teaching. The work consists of a number of twigs of the same size, being placed by it with their larger ends in the mangrove mud, their upper and smaller ends being brought together neatly, so as to form a complete bower. This done, the bird *(chlamydera nuchalis)* then amuses itself by flying to and fro with a shell in its beak, always carefully depositing it at the entrance of the bower, then flying off for another and another, and, as if to store it, bringing seeds or anything ornamental it meets with and placing them also with much care at the entrance of the bower, but always passing through it in the course of its work. Our speculations about this being the nest of the bird were soon at an end, by discovering that the bower was below high water of spring tides.

Many of the natives were now seen on the opposite bank of the river lighting fires with ruthless destruction. We saw them also blazing over many miles of country, and considered their doing so was to "burn us out," as is their custom.

All hands were employed wooding and watering; in the course of which they found a tree with the following interesting inscription on it:—"This river was discovered by the officers of H.M.S. *Beagle*, on the 18th of October, 1839, and was named the "Victoria River," in honour of her Majesty the Queen of England." Near it two water holes were found, which are no doubt the *Beagle's* wells.

We found the tides were regular and very strong, the ebb running seven hours, the flood five.

Next morning, before daylight I started with a whale-boat's crew, accompanied by the Second Officer, to visit the late camp and to search for letters left there by Gregory, taking with us provisions sufficient for five days.

We had gone many miles before daylight showed us where we were, and the scenery by which we were surrounded was truly grand. Every mountain top presented the appearance of a naturally inacces-

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sible fortress. The river stream was rushing onwards in "bores," and hurrying our boat rapidly on its bosom, sometimes indeed rendering it quite unmanageable. How readily might a fertile mind consider this as emblematic of those happy moments of the sunny days of life which rush from us, and which no sooner come than they are gone! But we had no time for comparisons. Before the tide had turned down we found we had thus gone over fifty miles. We accordingly landed, and commenced our search, with the hours of daylight left, in the spot indicated by the notice, namely, ten miles below Steep Head. But we could find nothing, not a trace of the camp in all the places that we searched, through which people could only enter by openings in the mangroves. At sunset we looked out for a camp for the night, and hauled our boat on a flat rock where there was but two feet rise and fall. The thermometer in the sun was 125°.

Next morning having determined to proceed as far as Steep Head, we examined every spot on both sides of the river for the camp. After a hurried breakfast, and when rounding the lower portion of Long Reach to the S.E., discovered the camp before us. But it was six miles below Steep Head and not ten. It looked like an English farm-yard, abounding in thatched houses, huts, sheep-pens, horse-sheds, forge, &c.; and the place, too, was well selected for a camp.

We landed on a pier made of large stones and pigs of ballast; and as we proceeded in our road lay iron hoops, rope, tubs, buckets, old clothes, Indian corn, old boots and shoes, pieces of harness, and a pair of Mr. J. Wilson's new flannel inexpressible linings shall I call them; and we arrived at the Oven, in the interior of which, protected by four iron pigs of ballast, we discovered a bottle, containing a notice to the following effect.

Camp, Victoria River.

On Saturday, 21st of June, 1856, the exploring party of the North Australian Expedition, consisting of seven persons, (as under,) left this camp on their way to the Albert River, in the Gulf of Carpentaria; and on Wednesday, July the 2nd, the remainder (as under) finally abandoned the camp and proceeded down the river to join the schooner *Tom Tough*, which had dropped down to Shoal Reach about three months previously.

The vessel will sail as speedily as possible for Timor, whence, after obtaining supplies, she will proceed to the Albert River, and the detachment of the Expedition on board will form camp and await the arrival of Mr. Gregory.

Subsequent information will be left on Entrance Island.

Exploring Party:—A. C. Gregory, Commander; H. C. Gregory; Dr. F. Mueller; J. R. Elsey; R. Bowman; C. Dean; J. Melville; and thirty-four horses.

On board:—T. Baines; J. S. Wilson; J. Flood; G. Phibbs; C. Humphrey; J. Fahey; H. Richards; J. M'Donald; W. Dawson; F. Showel, and J. Selby.

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John Finlay, carpenter of the schooner, died April 22nd, 1856, and is buried near a gouty stem tree.

Tuesday Evening 1st of July.—The finder of this document will greatly oblige the Expedition by giving it every publicity, and, if possible, by forwarding it to his Excellency the Governor of New South Wales, or any other of the Australian Colonies that may be convenient.

T T. BAINES.

After perusing this information, we went to the Forge, where another paper was found buried, containing a similar notice. We then passed an hour at the Camp, admiring all the arrangements. It consisted of seven thatched houses, three huts, some sheds for cattle, and sheep pens, two deep and good wells, and an entrenchment all round. No natives had been near the place since the party had left it. A road was cut several miles in a S.S.E. direction as straight as an arrow. Before leaving I sat down at Gregory's table and penned a notice to leave there, small as was the prospect of its being ever found. But it related our arrival, object, and intention; and then proceeded to place the papers in security for the next visitor. The boat's crew meanwhile having dined, had discovered a small pot of black paint, and were amusing themselves by painting some facetious notices outside the doorways, and a board would inform the visitor that at the "Victoria Hotel" Good Beds would be found, besides Ginger Beer and Refreshments. But it was acknowledged to me that a person had actually to his disappointment, made his fortune at the Diggings by selling ginger beer.

After filling our water casks at Gregory's well, we commenced our descent of the river.

Although the scenery around was magnificent, and would have attracted the attention of the voyager, I could find no interest in it. My mind was entirely absorbed in the movements of Gregory's party and my own disappointments; and to my discredit as it may be nature had no charms for me!

We hauled the boat up at dark on a sandy tongue of land in Long Reach, and were compelled to burn fires all round us to keep off the swarms of musquitoes and flies that infested us. At our dinner we had actually to put our great coats on and turn the collars up to keep off these interminable pests. But all this was of little avail. They found the way to give us a sleepless night, one of continual torment instead of rest. The men suffered on that night who had never felt a musquito. In the morning, as might be expected, we scarcely knew each other. Our faces, eyes, and hands, were fearfully swollen,—and, without waiting for breakfast, we made off for the centre of the stream, by which in some degree we managed to avoid our tormentors.

As we were hurried down the river by the ebb, it presented at low water a far different appearance to that which it had done;—all the extensive mud flats scarcely leaving us a channel to proceed through.

On these flats we saw the stately black and white ibis, with his

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red legs; and also a few pelican, but we were too weary to think of our guns.

On Musquito Flat we intended to have dined; but the moment the boat touched the shore we were assailed by such a host of musquitoes that we thought it wiser to haul off and take refuge at anchor in the river. At this anchorage I had the misfortune to lose my gun overboard by accident irrevocable, for the tide was too rapid and the water too muddy to attempt to recover it. Here also the chronometer was thrown off the compass-box, the effect of which was to break the balance spring and glass, and to add to my misfortunes, which it is well known never come singly, while using the pocket chart of the river, that I had treasured much, a sudden puff of wind blew it overboard. This Musquito Flat had brought us nothing but a series of disasters.

Having anchored to the flood so as not to lose ground, at 2h. a.m. on Sunday morning the ebb commenced and we again started; but I had no chart to guide me, and had to guess our way, when suddenly, in the midst of the stream, we were stopped by land, of which I knew nothing. The tide was rushing rapidly by, and I recollected there was a rise and fall of 20 feet, and that we passed this place at high water. We therefore proceeded slowly until daylight showed us a steep sand bank, far over our heads, on part of which we managed to land.

The tides had now become very rapid, on the change of the moon, and it was impossible to cross them except at slack water, which was almost instantaneous, for the moment the one tide ceased the other commenced.

At length we arrived on board completely knocked up; not having seen a single native. Their fires, however, and the howling of the dogs at night, had proved to us that they were not far off. The thermometer had been at noon of each day consecutively 125°, 116°, and 134·5°. And it was with no satisfaction that I found the men were so fatigued that it would not be prudent to attempt removing; five were on the sick list with fever, dysentery, inflamed eyes, and rheumatism.

When the tide slacked we unmoored with difficulty; and after some round turns and twistings by the tide, which took great liberties with my *Torch*, we pursued our course down the entrance of the river.

The heat was so excessive to day, and the evaporation so great, that the backs of all my books parched and curled up; a box-wood ruler lying on my table warped three eighths of an inch in twenty-four inches; a box-wood thermometer, three eighths of an inch thick, warped one tenth, threatening to break the glass tube, which fortunately had a little play.

At sunset on the 2nd, we anchored between Entrance Island and Indian Head, where I at once sent a boat to place a notice of our proceedings and intended movements.

While at dinner, the vessel took a shear with the flood tide, the officer having omitted to stopper the cable after veering: and

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before she could be brought up, 70 fathoms of chain had run out, which placed the vessel in a most dangerous situation, only a ship's length from the sunken rocks off the North end of Entrance Island. In this position, if we had hove in, even with the steam up, she would have broken her shear and gone on the rocks; our only chance was to wait until slack water and save the anchor. A man was therefore kept at the helm to ease her, and I remained anxiously watching her movements. The tide was running six or seven knots flood.

At 11h. p.m. the tide slacked, and after a long and tedious heave the anchor was up, and we steamed closer under Indian Head, bearing South, (magnetic,) where the anchor was let go for the night. This occurrence prevented my visiting Indian Head, where I had hoped to see Capt. Stokes' relic of his voyage, and leave one in its place for the next visitors.

(To be continued.)

The Principal Evils of our Merchant Service.—No. II.

London, June 17th, 1857.

Sir,—Having noticed in your valuable work for the present month another case of dismasting, where the Board of Trade has presented the Captain of the American merchant ship *Hamilton* with a chronometer, for his humane services in rescuing the Master and part of the crew from the wreck of the British vessel *Thetis*, it has occurred to me that if these acts of justice are gratifying in themselves—which they certainly must be—how much more so it would be to prevent, as much as possible, the recurrence of those disasters by which they are rendered necessary. Whoever hears of a man-of-war being dismasted? If, then, such stringent regulations as prevent this in H.M. ships were adopted, in respect of manning, discipline, &c., in merchant ships, as pointed out in my last, these disasters would rarely occur; for there is no more reason why a merchant ship should be dismasted than one of her Majesty's ships, provided that she be sent to sea in a proper state, with a sufficient number of hands to work her, and the upper deck clear of everything in the shape of cargo.

No time can be more favourable than the present for instituting enquiry and providing a remedy for all those glaring evils included under the four heads commented on in your July number, and which cannot be too often repeated till they are amended, viz., undermanning, overloading, cheap outfits, and absence of discipline. If Parliament refuses to sanction a code of laws necessary for the safety of her Majesty's subjects travelling by sea, and for the maintenance of a safe and proper discipline to insure obedience to orders, when proposed to them, then at least the responsibility must rest where it is.

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